Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and all countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic's except Azerbaijan.

(b) the bilateral Trade Agreements broadly provide for Most Favoured Nation treatment on reciprocal basis, co-operation for mutual benefits with a view to expanding trade and strengthening economic co-operation, sympathetic consideration to the representations in connection with the implementation of the agreements, validity of the agreements, trade fairs, exchange of information, Counter-Trade, exchange of business delegation, co-operation in the various spheres on mutual interest, specifying the currency for payment purposes, providing safeguard clauses, creation of forums like Joint Trade Committee to monitor the implementation of Trade Agreements, arrangements for liquidation of the rupee balances through imports from India in case of agreements with specific countries.

(c) The Government proposes to have preferential trading agreements with Colombia, Chile and Venezuela. The negotiations are going on with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Madagascar, Norway, Nigeria and Togo for Bilateral Trade Agreements.

Balance of trade position

2398. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the balance of trade position of the country as on date; and

(b) what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) As per the latest provisional data available from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta, trade balance is placed at US $(-) 6765.89 million during April—February 2001-02.

(b) a medium term export strategy for 2002—07 has been announced which aims at achieving 1% of world exports by the year 2006-07. The EXIM Policy for 2002—07 announced recently has also incorporated a number of measures to proactively promote exports which *inter alia* include permitting off shore Banking units in Special Economic Zones, transport subsidy for export of certain agricultural products, development of centers of export excellence, additional support for electronic hardware exports and further reduction in transaction cost.

Deterioration of basic industries

†2399. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the condition of basic industries of the country is being deteriorated day by day and growth rate has been merely 2.7 per cent as compared to last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the performance of petroleum, coal, power sector and steel sector has been very poor and the growth rate has declined to 1.5 per cent from 7.5 per cent; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to improve the condition of these sectors and make them remunerative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) and (b) The six infrastructure industries namely, Crude petroleum, Petroleum Refinery Products, Coal, Electricity, Cement, and Finished steel registered a growth rate of 2.7 per cent during April—February 2002 as against 5.6 per cent for April—February 2001.

(c) Petroleum refinery products, Electricity and Finished steel registered positive but lower growth rates during April—February 2002 vis-a-vis April—February 2001. Crude petroleum registered a negative growth rate while Coal and Cement registered a positive

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.